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Title- Energy Connections: Engaging the consumer in building stronger systems

In many different places in the world, to varying degrees, consumers are seeing increasing levels of choice in how they buy energy. However, they can often struggle with understanding the implications of those choices and are looking for unbiased information. Consumers see rising prices and want to understand issues that affect them, but don't speak the technical language of the energy distribution sector. Consumers want to have a say in policies that impact their bill, but lack the time, and resources to submit proposals.

A review of consumer empowerment and engagement in six places – Ontario Canada, Australia, the United States, Austria, Italy and the Netherlands – bears this out. In an era of rising prices, increased competition and growing system challenges, including the need for conservation, regulators are now also looking to consumers to provide the “people power” to affect change and improve energy markets and systems.